

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T LUSAKA 0556

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RH US ZA

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED US ACTION ON RHODESIA

REF: LUSAKA 494

1. SUMMARY. DESPITE REPORTS OF NEGOTIATING BREAKTHROUGHS, WE BELIEVE SMITH IS STILL RESISTING THE KINDS OF CONCESSIONS NKOMO NEEDS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. MEANWHILE, BORDER VIOLENCE IS ESCALATING, SANCTIONS ARE TIGHTENING, AND FOREIGN SENTIMENT IS RUNNING AGAINST SMITH EVEN FROM PREVIOUS BACKERS SUCH AS PM VORSTER OF SOUTH AFRICA. SMITH NEEDS TO BE SHOCKED INTO A GENUINE CHANGE OF HEART. HE MIGHT BE IF SOUTH AFRICA, THE US AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES INDIVIDUALLY OR IN COORDINATION WERE TO TELL SMITH FALTLY THAT HE CANNOT, AS HE HAS DONE IN PAST, COUNT ON ASSUMED

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ULTIMATE SUPPORT FROM THESE QUARTERS IN FINAL CRUNCH

TO RESIST COMMUNIST INTERVENTION. CERTAINLY USG CANNOT AFFORD TO BE SEEN AS AMONG POTENTIAL SAVIORS OF SMITH'S ILLEGAL AND UNJUST WHITE MINORITY REGIME AND HIS OUTDATED RHODESIAN WAY OF LIFE. AFTER CONSULTING WITH BRITISH, US SHOULD ASSERT ITS LEADERSHIP AND PLAY A RESPONSIBLE ROLE BY TELLING SMITH HOW ISOLATED AND HOPELESS HIS SITUATION HAS BECOME. END SUMMARY.

2. RHODESIA APPEARS TO BE ON VERGE OF WIDESPREAD AND ESCALATING VIOLENCE. ITS SECURITY FORCES MAY FOR NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS CONTINUE BE ABLE TO CONTAIN NATIONALIST GUERRILLA INCURSIONS BUT WITH DIFFICULTY. CLOSURE OF MOZAMBIQUE BORDER TO RHODESIA AND NEED MAINTAIN SIZEABLE NUMBER OF WHITE RESERVISTS ON ACTIVE DUTY WITH SECURITY FORCES AND POSSIBLE NEED FOR MORE WAR MATERIAL IS BOUND TO STRAIN RHODESIAN ECONOMY VIRTUALLY TO BREAKING POINT. ZIMBABWE NATIONALISTS AND THEIR OUTSIDE SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY PROSPECTS FOR VIOLENT SETTLEMENT BY VICTORY OF SOVIET-BACKED CUBAN AND MPLA FORCES IN ANGOLA, WESTERN INABILITY TO BLOCK SOVIET MEDDLING THERE AND RETREAT OF SOUTH AFRICANS BEFORE CUBAN OFFENSIVE.

3. THERE IS SOME SKEPTICISM IN LUSAKA THAT WHATEVER CONCESSIONS SMITH MAY HAVE TABLED WITH NKOMO ARE INSUFFICIENT FOR NKOMO TO SELL EVEN TO HIS OWN ANC FAITHFUL MUCH LESS TO ZIMBABWE MILITANTS. IN FANT I JUST RECEIVED CONFIRMATION OF THIS FROM CHONA WHO (PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW TERMS OF LATEST SMITH PROPOSAL) SAID IF IT INVOLVED PARITY AND MAJORITY RULE IN FIVE YEARS, IT WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. CHONA CALLED MAINLY TO SAY THAT KAUNDA HAD JUST DECIDED AGAINST RECEIVING A TWO-MAN RHODESIAN CABINET DELEGATION SENT BY SMITH OSTENSIBLY TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR NEW OFFER. KAUNDA REJECTED VISIT AS TOO LATE FOR ZAMBIA TO GET INVOLVED AGAIN WITH SAME OLD SMITH. NEW, REHABILITATED AND CHANGED MAN COULD BE DIFFERENT. IF NKOMO-SMITH AGREEMENT REACHED IN NEXT FEW DAYS, MAYBE THEN KAUNDA WOULD TALK TO SOME OF SMITH'S MEN, CHONA SAID.

4. WE SUSPECT THAT AMONG MANY RHODESIAN FRONT STALWARTS,
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INCLUDING SMITH HIMSELF, THERE REMAINS HOPE THAT SOMEHOW IN EXTREMIS RHODESIAN WHITES CAN DEPEND ON SOUTH AFRICA, THE US AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS TO BE THEIR ULTIMATE SAVIORS AGAINST COMMUNIST INTERVENTION. THOSE RHODESIANS WHO HOLD THIS VIEW MAY IN FACT HAVE GAINED UNINTENDED ENCOURAGEMENT FROM RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRES FORD AND SECY KISSINGER TO EFFECT US WILL NOT PERMIT SOVIET AND CUBANS TO RUN REPLAY ELSEWHERE OF THEIR MILITARY INTERVENTION

IN ANGOLA. THIS IRRATIONAL CONVICTION THAT IF RHODESIAN WHITES MERELY HOLD TIGHT ALL WILL BE WELL MAY BE ONE OF PRINCIPAL REASONS WHY SMITH HAS DRAGGED HIS FEET ON POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH NKOMO. THERE MAY STILL BE EXCEEDINGLY SLIM CHANCE FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION IF SMITH ACTS QUICKLY AND SINCERELY TO WORK OUT TERMS WITH NKOMO.

5. WE BELIEVE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR USG IN CONSULTATION WITH UK TO CONSIDER TAKING STRONG AND CLEAR POSITION AIMED AT DIRECTLY PRESSURING SMITH TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION. WE SUGGEST THIS BE DONE IN FORM OF MESSAGE TO SMITH FROM APPROPRIATE LEVEL IN USG. WORDING OF MESSAGE SHOULD LEAVE SMITH IN NO DOUBT THAT IF NO AGREEMENT REACHED WITH NKOMO OR NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNNECESSARILY PROTRACTED WITH SUBSEQUENT INTENSIFICATION OF NATIONALISTS MILITARY PRESSURE ON RHODESIA, USG WILL NOT RPT NOT INTERVENE EVEN WERE CUBAN, SOVIET OR CHINESE TO BECOME OPENLY INVOLVED.

6. MOREOVER, IF WE PREPARED TO DO SO, WE SHOULD DISCUSS WITH SAG PM VORSTER REASONS BEHIND OUR POSITION IN HOPE SAG PM WOULD REGARD THEM AS IMPORTANT TO WHATEVER STAND SOUTH AFRICA TAKES TOWARD SMITH. AT LEAST WE WOULD WANT VORSTER HIMSELF IN NO DOUBT ABOUT OUR POSITION AND ABLE TO CONFIRM TO SMITH ITS UTTER SERIOUSNESS.

7. SMITH SHOULD ALSO BE TOLD WE BELIEVE REASONABLE BLACK ZIMBABWEAN LEADERSHIP IS NOT YET SO EMBITTERED THAT IT WOULD BE UNCOMPROMISING TOWARD A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY IN RHODESIA SIMILAR TO THAT IN ZAMBIA AND BOTSWANA, THUS ASSURING A FUTURE FOR WHITE SETTLERS WHO HAVE LESS TO FEAR FROM THIS PROSPECT THAN FROM VIOLENT TAKEOVER. IN FACT IT MIGHT BE POINTED OUT TO SMITH THAT WE BELIEVE KAUNDA AND KHAMA COULD BE COUNTED ON TO CONTINUE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH NATIONALISTS TOWARD THIS END. BY FINALLY
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COMING TO TERMS AT CONFERENCE TABLE SMITH WILL DO MUCH TO CONSOLIDATE POSITION OF ZAMBABWE MODERATES AND TO GET NEW COUNTRY OFF TO A RELATIVELY SAFE AND PEACEFUL START IN SOME HARMONY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. HOWEVER, IF SMITH DELAYS AND STALLS FOR MORE TIME, ZIMBABWE MODERATES WILL SURELY BE THRUST ASIDE BY MORE MILITANT ELEMENTS WHO WILL THEN SEEK DICTATE TERMS OF MAJORITY RULE TO WHITES AT POINT OF A GUN.

8. A USG MESSAGE TO SMITH ALONG FOREGOING LINES IS NEEDED ALSO TO DISPELL CONTINUING SUSPICION AMONG ZIMBABWE NATIONALISTS, AS WELL AS MOST ZAMBIANS AND OTHER AFRICANS, THAT USG POSITION TOWARD MAJORITY RULE IS AMBIGUOUS-- THAT US SPEAKS OF ITS DESIRE TO SEE MAJORITY RULE PREVAIL IN RHODESIA BUT REMAINS UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO TAKE ANY POSITIVE STEPS TO HELP BRING IT ABOUT IN

WAY THAT WOULD AVERT THE VIOLENCE WHICH WE SPECIFICALLY
DEPLORE.

9. IT WILL BE HARD FOR ME TO SEE PRES KAUNDA IN IN NEXT
FEW DAYS WITHOUT TELLING HIM WHAT ACTION USG HAS OR WILL
TAKE TO HELP SEE PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND
MAJORITY RULE PREVAIL IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. BY
THEMSELVES, STATEMENTS OF OUR DETERMINATION TO RESIST
FURTHER SPREAD OF SOVIET/CUBAN INFLUENCE AND MILITARY
PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL HAVE LITTLE IMPACT IN
ZAMBIA OR AFRICA. KAUNDA TOO IS WORRIED ABOUT SOVIET
PENETRATION OF REGION BUT HE IS ALSO FIRMLY
COMMITTED TO EARLY ACHIEVEMENT OF RACIAL AND POLITICAL
JUSTICE BOTH IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. HE WILL VIEW
INTERVENTION BY COMMUNIST FORCES TO BRING THAT ABOUT
IN VERY DIFFERENT LIGHT FROM WAY HE VIEWED THEIR
INTERVENTION TO UPHOLD MINORITY REGIME IN ANGOLA.
KAUNDA EXPECTS FROM US SOME NEW INITIATIVE THAT WILL
BOTH AVERT FURTHER COMMUNIST PENETRATION IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA WHILE ACHIEVING MAJORITY RULE WITHOUT FURTHER
DELAY. IT IS IN OUR OWN INTERESTS TO SPEAK OUT AND
DESTROY SMITH'S FALSE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHERE USG STANDS.
THIS MAY BE LAST CHANCE TO MOVE SMITH TOWARD
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. IF WE NOW KEEP SILENT
OR IF WE CONTENT OURSELVES WITH WEAK BUT PIOUS
INJUNCTIONS AGAINST VIOLENCE, DOING NOTHING TO
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MAKE OUR POSITION LOUD AND CLEAR, ZAMBIAN AS WELL
AS AFRICAN DISILLUSIONMENT WITH USG WILL GROW.
IN THAT EVENT RECENTLY ENCOURAGING TREND TOWARD
CLOSER AND MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP BY
US AND THIS COUNTRY AND OTHER AFRICAN MODERATES
WILL BE CHECKED IF NOT REVERSED.
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